

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 990

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

AMCONSUL TORONTO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: REFERENDUM PREPARATIONS

1. RENE LEVESQUE ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY AT HIS WEEKLY PRESS CONFERENCE THAT PREPARATIONS FOR A REFERENDUM ON QUESTION OF "SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION" ARE PROCEEDING APACE. HE SAID PUBLICLY FOR FIRST TIME THAT DRAFT LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING AND DEFINING NATURE OF REFERENDUM WILL BE TABLED IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DURING PRESENT SESSION, VIZ. BEFORE END OF THIS YEAR. PM DENIED THAT TIMING OF REFERENDUM WOULD BE INFLUENCED BY OPPOSITION TO RECENTLY INTRODUCED LANGUAGE LEGISLATION, BUT REITERATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S GENEROUSLY IMPRECISE EXPRESSION OF INTENTION TO HOLD REFERENDUM "BEFORE NEXT ELECTION."

2. LEVESQUE INDICATED THAT SEVERAL GROUPS ARE PARTICIPATING IN DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF PREPARATION FOR REFERENDUM. A GROUP IN INTERGOVERNMENTAL MINISTRY UNDER ECONOMIST BERNARD BONIN IS WORKING ON

PLAN FOR ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION. A TEAM OF MINISTERS INCLUDING LEVESQUE HIMSELF, MINFIN PARIZEAU, CLAUDE MORIN, AND MIN ECONOMIC DEV LANDRY HAVE LAUNCHED A SERIES OF CONTACTS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE
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QUEBEC IN EFFORT INFORM KEY AUDIENCES, REPRESENTATIVES OF FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS AND BUSINESS LEADERS OF QUEBEC'S PLANS FOR FUTURE AS WELL AS HER REASONS FOR WISHING ASSUME POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY. A THIRD ELEMENT IN CAMPAIGN MENTIONED BY PM IS PUBLICATION FOR FIRST TIME OF QUEBEC "NATIONAL ACCOUNTS." FINAL INITIATIVE IN LEVESQUE'S LIST WAS PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN, WHICH "LE DEVOIR" SPECULATED WILL BEGIN WITH PUBLICATIN OF PLAN FOR ECONOMIC

ASSOCIATION. IN ADDITION TO GOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS, PM SAID PQ, AS A PARTY, HAS FORMED "STRATEGY COMMITTEE" AT NATIONAL LEVEL WITH CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATIONS BEGINNING TO WORK ON PREPARATION FOR REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN AT LOCAL LEVEL.

3. COMMENT: FACT THAT PQ IS GEARING UP FOR EXPECTEDLY HARD PRE-REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN SHOULD SURPRISE NO ONE, NOR SHOULD IT BE INTERPRETED AS A SIGN THAT A REFERENDUM MAY BE ANTICIPATED IN NEAR FUTURE. LEVESQUE AND HIS COLLEAGUES ARE FULLY AWARE THAT MAJORITY OF QUEBEC VOTERS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT VOTE AT THIS TIME FOR QUEBEC POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY. THUS, GOQ UNLIKELY CALL REFERENDUM UNDER UNPROMISING PROTENDS. INSTEAD, INTENSE CAMPAIGN AIMED AT CONVINCING MAJORITY OF PEOPLE OF NECESSITY FOR ASSUMING POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY WILL BE UNDERTAKEN. THIS CAMPAIGN IS LIKELY LAST AT LEAST A YEAR AND COULD CONTINUE FOR 3-4 YEARS.
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